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“The Crusaders.”

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DELIVERED BEFORE

THE

DE MOLAY AND VIRGINIA
ENCAMPMENTS,

IN

THE MUSIC HALL, BOSTON,

JUNE 24, 1858.

By JOHN H. SHEPPARD,

A MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF THE TEMPLE.

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THE CRUSADERS.

BENEATH that statue of majestic grace
Where stands Beethoven—genius of the place—
What can I say to charm the listening ear,
When Red Cross Knights and beauteous dames appear ?
Alas ! my promise rash—with grief profound,
I feel that Poesy is hallow'd ground—
It must be pure ;—there is no medium known
Between the Diamond gem and showy stone.
Oh, that some Troubadour in life's bright noon
With cockle-hat, and staff, and sandal shoon,
Skilled in gay science—fair to lady's eye,
Would fill this Music Hall with minstrelsy.
Then would the Red Cross wave o'er Syria's shore,
The days of Chivalry return once more ;
And the loud clarion wake to life again
The steel-clad Templar and dark Saracen.

Amidst this changing world there is one theme,
Th' Historian's talisman—the Poet's dream,
The sweetest, loveliest home of all the Nine—
The Mason's birth-place—ancient Palestine.
Enchanting spot—those hours ne'er come again,
When young life drew thy pictures in the brain.
Oft at such time—on a fond mother's knee,
We heard her tell a thousand tales of thee :
From Carmel's top we seem'd to look around
On the great Western Sea, and sky profound ;

In mantle robed—of venerable mien,
 The man of God, Elijah, there was seen ;
 Till far beyond the dark waves rose on high
 A hand-like cloud, that soon spread o'er the sky ;
 We saw those towers—where Salem rose divine—
 And mountains round about JEHOVAH's shrine ;
 Mused on the waters of the deep Dead Sea,
 Or walk'd along the shores of Galilee ;
 Wept in the garden on that awful night
 A traitor's kiss betray'd the Lord of Light ;
 And trembled by the Cross, when Calvary's rock
 In the dark hour was rent by earthquake's shock.
 Pictures like these were form'd where childhood trod,
 And Bible stories led the heart to GOD.
 And yet the panorama charms us still ;
 We gaze on Jordan's bank, or Zion's hill,
 Like Bunyan's Pilgrim—when far, far away,
 He saw the mountains of eternal day.

Dear is that spot where Abraham's faith was tried,
 Where Patriarchs worshipped, and where Saints have died,
 Along whose heights the castled walls look down
 On Kedron's brook, and tombs of past renown.
 Here stood that Temple, gorgeous and sublime,
 Whose proud memorial will survive all time.
 Built by the wisest man e'er seen on earth,
 Form'd by a pattern which in Heav'n had birth,
 By cunning workmen wrought from distant lands,
 Adorn'd with precious stones by skilful hands,
 Where WISDOM, STRENGTH and BEAUTY were display'd,
 Noiseless as Nature, when a world she made,
 It stood alone on Mount Moriah's height,
 The wonder of the age—a Beacon light.

But while th' *external* won the human eye,
 Far other seem'd the plan of Deity,
 From numerous craftsmen, bound by sacred ties,
 An Order sprung, that spread to distant skies.
 The Temple was a moral Type to them,
 Who form'd the GRAND LODGE at Jerusalem.
 Whence the materials—tools—and pillars are
 Masonic emblems, beautiful and rare.
 Whene'er a Lodge convenes—whate'er degree,
 The ideal fabric in the work we see,
 Wrought with such skill—by God's own hand design'd,
 The Temple lives immortal in the mind.

We pass a thousand years—their shadows seem
 Through Time's long vista like a mournful dream.
 But hark! A voice wakes in the desert air,
 Make His path straight, and for the Lord prepare.
 So spake the Messenger, where'er he went
 With heavenly tidings of the Advent sent ;
 From Jordan's waters to Philistia's coasts,
 The Great Precursor of the Lord of Hosts ;
 Our patron Saint—dear to the Mason's heart,
 To whom this Festal hour we set apart.
 He saw the bright and Morning Star above,
 The Lamb of GOD—the Lord of Light and Love.
 Alas! Sad memory oft recalls the day
 His bleeding head upon a charger lay ;
 To please a wanton, Herod slew the just ;
 Herod of all the antimasons *first*—
 But, like the Tetrarch all such men have fled ;
 Look where oblivion buries its own dead !

Would but one spark of that Promethean fire

Were mine—which kindl'd Tasso's heavenly lyre,
 To paint the Maid of the great Crusade,
 A hermit kindled in a Convent shade ;
 When Europe's voice as one, like thunder driven,
 " It is the will of God !" rent earth and heaven ;
 When countless troops, and chiefs of high command
 Led on the war, and sought the Holy Land ;
 When Godfrey's banner frown'd on Salem's tower,
 And the crush'd Moslem wept the fall of power.

See on yon castled steep at break of dawn,
 A Templar starts—and Chivalry is born.
 A few Knights met—De Payens at their head—
 To guard the Fair, or watch the sick man's bed ;
 So meek—so poor—these Champions of the Cross
 All their device at first—" *Two on one horse.*"
 So fast the Order rose—so large it grew,—
 It held the mightiest warriors Europe knew ;
 So strict their Rules, and terrible their name ;
 To be a Templar was a mark of fame ;
 Such, St. Bernard, the foreman of his age,
 As writer—orator—or learned sage.
 Long, long the tale, where Templars fought in vain,
 When sad Jerusalem was lost again ;
 When the dire battle of Tiberias fell
 On Europe's ear, like some great funeral knell.
 The Red Cross waved, alas ! o'er fields of blood,
 Too small their band to stem the Moslem flood.
 Slain to a man,—save but a few assured
 Of life,—if only, they their faith abjured ;
 Life and dishonor ! No. The evening star
 Gloom'd on each head struck off by scimitar

Weep, pilgrim, weep! for never, never more
 Could man the Holy Republic restore.
 Not fall of Acre—nor fierce battles since
 By Richard, Albion's lion-hearted prince,
 Nor brave St. Louis, King of France, could win
 Salem's strong towers from conquering Saladin.
 Foremost in fight—the last to quit the field
 Mid countless foes unused to quail or yield,
 From every hold and castle under heav'n's,
 By an overwhelming force, o'erpower'd and drov'n,
 The Templars sigh'd, Farewell the Syrian coast,
 Farewell the Holy Land, forever lost!

They sought a home, where in life's sad decline,
 Their evening sunset yet might sweetly shine—
 But sought in vain—too credulous at first
 They found that wealth allured a tyrant's lust.
 Falsely accused—by artful wiles betrayed—
 Stretched on the rack—to dungeon cells convey'd,
 These noble Templars wasted, day by day,
 To fire and fagot—pope and king, a prey.
 Thus, the brave De la More—Can it be true,
 Torture in England?—bade the world adieu.
 Thus De Molay, whom pope and king had doom'd,
 First rack'd—then martyr'd, by slow fire consumed.

THE DEATH-SONG ON DE MOLAY

Heard ye the cry—where the red brand rages?
 Where the flames round the Martyr spread;
 It echoes along the dark pathway of ages;
 It comes like a voice from the dead.

“King of France and Pope Clement”—the martyr cried,
 “Oh prepare ye your GOD to meet !
 I summon ye both—ere a year shall betide
 To appear at the JUDGMENT SEAT !”

Thus the last of all the Commanders spake,
 The noble and brave De Molay ;
 While his gallant form stood in chains at the stake,
 And the slow fire seized on its prey.

The crowd hover'd near him ; in mute despair
 They gazed on the face of the man,
 As his eyes shone in faith, and his lips moved in prayer,
 While a chill through each bosom ran.

Not a nerve in his frame seemed to falter ;
 He died like a spirit forgiven ;
 Like the angel, Manoah beheld at the altar
 Ascending the flame up to heaven.

A year had not past—king Philip was dead,
 Pope Clement, he lay in his tomb !
 Tiara and crown ! can ye helmet the head,
 In the day of eternal doom ?

Though days of Chivalry fade from the world,
 His glory will ne'er pass away ;
 We march with the Red Cross banner unfurl'd
 And our watch-word is DE MOLAY.

Unhappy Palestine, of joy bereft,
 Thy widowed heart is all that now is left.
 Outcasts on earth, the sons of Abraham roam,
 And the poor Hebrew truly has no home ;

On Mount Moriah Omar's mosque appears,
 And Judah's daughters weep with hopeless tears.
 E'en thy sad waters, lake of Galilee,
 Where fleets of fishermen once crowned the sea,
 Where proud Capernaum and Bethsaida stood,
 With all their beauty mirrored in the flood,
 Are desolate ! Bleak mountains stand around,
 Nor boat, nor sail from shore to shore is found.
 All, all is changed —Oh ! when shall come the time
 The LORD will visit this once favor'd clime ?

Yet, guilty man, not Nature, is to blame ;
 Sow but the ground—her fields will yield the same ;
 Nor fig tree green—nor vine e'er looked more fair
 When David's royal harp was echoing there,
 On Jezreel's plain still buds the Sharon Rose,
 And sweet as ever the pale Lily grows ;
 Oh haste the hour—Great Ruler of the sky,
 When Israel's tribes—their banners waving high,
 With one consent—one vast, electric move,
 From all lands under Heav'n, where'er they rove,
 Shall homeward march ; and where the patriarchs lie,
 On their own soil live free, or dare to die,
 Then will they see—when all their woes they trace—
 In HIM they crucified a SAVIOUR's face ;
 And as prophetic rolls are fast unfur'd,
 Behold the Lamb of GOD, REDEEMER of the world.

And ere I close these humble, artless lines,
 Can I forget thee, where such glory shines,
 Land of the Free ? For peace and arts renown'd,
 For cities famed—with schools and churches crown'd ;
 From sea to sea thy eagle flag bears sway,

A boundless empire, born but yesterday.
 How glows my heart, Sir Knights and Brothers true,
 When on this hallow'd day I think of you.
 For never yet more high on earth did stand
 The great Fraternity, than in our land :
 No sect nor party has such wondrous power
 To save the Union, when dark tempests lower ;
 Would time permit us here to call the roll
 Of heroes, statesmen, men of heart and soul,
 How many names illustrious we should see
 Shining like brilliant stars in Masonry.
 There we behold Virginia's son of fire,
 Kindling the sparks of empire in his ire,
 A Patrick Henry—Warren, Washington—
 The sun would set before the roll was done.

Earth has no mound, where Fame's proud columns soar,
 So dear to memory as Mount Vernon's shore.
 There, where the broad Potomac charms the view
 With mirror'd woods, and sky of boundless blue,
 A humble tomb—in rough enclosure laid—
 Beneath a few tall Cedars' mournful shade,
 Is all that marks the hallow'd shrine of one,
 Whose spotless glory travels with the sun.

What though no Mausoleum crowns his grave,
 With gorgeous splendor, near Potomac's wave,
 Though no tall spire, when morning star shall rise,
 Tells where the FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY lies ;
 Yet pilgrims here will come with noiseless tread,
 To gain fresh virtue from the mighty dead ;
 Here, while a sunbeam radiates above,
 A nation's heart will burn with patriot love.

By Freeman sought, with holier unction blest,
Mount Vernon stands the Mecca of the West.
Departed greatness ne'er such reverence won,
As thine, immortal SHADE OF WASHINGTON.

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